

JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of the second annual Jewish American Heritage Month, which takes place in communities across the country each May.

Jewish American Heritage Month promotes awareness of the contributions American Jews have made to the fabric of American life, from technology and literature to entertainment, politics and medicine.

As we are all well aware, the foundation of our country is built upon the strengths of our unique cultures and backgrounds. While our diversity is our strength, ignorance about many cultures is still prevalent.

Because Jews make up only 2 percent of our Nation's population, most Americans have had few interactions with Jews and Jewish culture. The limited understanding of Jewish traditions and the Jewish experience and the historical role Jews have played in our Nation's development contributes to stereotypes and prejudices about Jews and the Jewish community.

For example, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, most recent hate crime statistics report that 69 percent of criminal incidents motivated by religious bias stemmed from anti-Jewish prejudice.

Like Black History Month and Women's History Month, Jewish American Heritage Month recognizes the abundance of contributions American Jews have made to the United States over the last 353 years.

It is my hope that by providing the framework for the discussion of Jewish contributions to our Nation, we will be able to reduce the ignorance that ultimately leads to anti-Semitism. One way Jewish American Heritage Month counters these prejudices is by providing educators the opportunity to include American Jews in discussions of history, as well as highlighting the leadership of members of the Jewish community in significant historical events.

For example, it might surprise many to learn that it was an American Jew, Irving Berlin, who wrote the lyrics to the song God Bless America. Even the very foundations of our country were impacted by Jews. Haym Salomon, a Jewish man, was one of the largest financiers of the American Revolutionary War.

And Rabbi Joachim Prinz was a passionate civil rights activist, appearing on the podium just moments before Dr. Martin Luther King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech. And the list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is why communities across the country have come together to celebrate Jewish American Heritage Month. Two years ago the Jewish Community in south Florida

approached me with the idea to honor the contributions of American Jews with a designated month each year. As the concept gained momentum, 250 of my colleagues joined me as original co-sponsors of a resolution urging the President to issue a proclamation for this month. Senator Arlen Specter led the effort in the Senate, and together the House and Senate unanimously passed the resolution supporting the creation of Jewish American Heritage Month. President Bush proclaimed the month of May as Jewish American Heritage Month for the first time in 2006, and again issued a proclamation this year.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that a coalition of organizations has come together to develop curriculum and coordinate events. This coalition, called the Jewish American Heritage Month Coalition, is led by United Jewish Communities, the American Jewish Historical Society, the American Jewish Archives and the Jewish Women's Archives.

The events can all be found on the national calendar of the Jewish American Heritage Month Coalition's Web site at www.JewishHeritage.us.

Mr. Speaker, I want to pause for a moment and thank this coalition for their tireless efforts to promote the outstanding events across the country. Each day in May has been packed with programs celebrating the contributions of American Jewry to our country, with movies, plays, art exhibitions, speakers, musical performances, and innovative educational curricula.

The Jewish American Heritage Month Coalition and the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington kicked off the month with a reception attended by several Members of Congress and about 200 guests.

Right here in Washington, the Library of Congress and the National Archives and Records Administration have hosted films, lectures, and discussions about Jewish contributions to America.

In my home State of Florida, there was a celebration of Jewish music and a discussion of Jewish contributions to the civil rights movement.

A New Jersey middle school hosted an essay contest entitled "I'm Proud to be an American Jew Because . . ."

Philadelphia hosted "American Jewish History Through the Arts," a series of free programs that highlight the American Jewish experience.

And this past weekend, the New York Liberty, the women's pro basketball team, hosted the WNBA's first Jewish American Heritage Month basketball game.

Mr. Speaker, we have come a long way in recent years to promote appreciation for the multicultural fabric of the United States. It is our responsibility to continue this education. If we as a Nation are to prepare our children for the challenges that lie ahead, then teaching diversity is a fundamental part of that promise. Together, we can

help achieve this goal of understanding with the celebration of Jewish American Heritage Month.

I thank my colleagues for their support and call on all Americans to observe this special month by celebrating the many contributions of Jewish culture throughout our Nation's history.

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TRADE AND LABOR

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HILL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, we are going to be doing several 1-hour Special Orders, and we have done them since January. I can't think of an issue that is more important and more pressing to us in this Chamber than trade and the saving of our jobs back in our districts.

We are going to be hearing tonight from a number of my colleagues on the Congressional Labor and Working Families Caucus, the House Trade Working Group, and Members of our side of the aisle that believe it is time that working people have somebody stand up and be their voices when their voices aren't heard.

So, Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to recognize a fellow Illinoisan from the Illinois delegation, a good friend of mine, someone who has took taken it upon himself to stand up for working people. So at this time I would like to yield to my colleague, Representative Dan Lipinski.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for yielding to me and also for all the hard work that he has done in his short career in Congress but in many years before that for America's workers.

I rise today with serious concerns about the trade policy of our country. This is a concern shared by tens of millions of Americans who have concerns every day about keeping their jobs or they have lost their jobs and being unable to find another job where they could possibly earn as much money as we see the trade policy of this country destroying so many good American jobs.

This trade policy has contributed to a record high, soaring trade deficit. There is wage depression and loss of quality, high-paying jobs. With the Panama, Peru, Colombia, and South Korea trade agreements pending congressional approval, we must take action now to correct the mistakes of previous trade agreements and ensure